

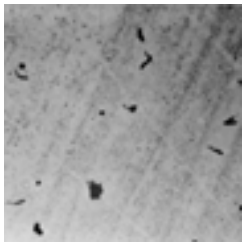
# Foodborne Illness: Ten Least Wanted Foodborne Pathogens

*Updated on April 10, 2003*



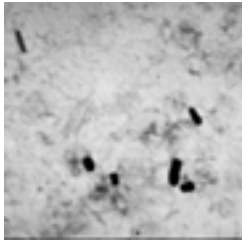
The U.S. Public Health Service has identified the following microorganisms as being the biggest culprits of foodborne illness, either because of the severity of the sickness or the number of cases of illness they cause. Beware of these pathogens: *Fight BAC!*

## LEARN WHERE THEY ARE AND HOW TO AVOID THEM



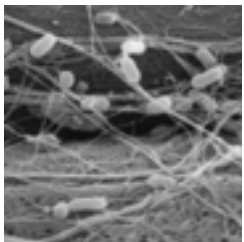
### ***Campylobacter***

Most common bacterial cause of diarrhea in the United States; Sources: *raw and undercooked meat and poultry*, raw milk and untreated water



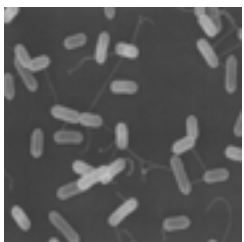
### ***Clostridium botulinum***

This organism produces a toxin which causes botulism, a life-threatening illness that can prevent the breathing muscles from moving air in and out of the lungs. Sources: home-prepared foods and herbal oils; honey should not be fed to children less than 12 months old



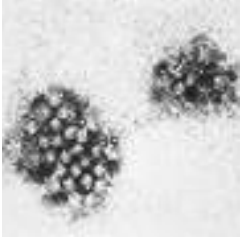
### ***E. coli O157:H7***

A bacterium that can produce a deadly toxin and causes approximately 73,000 cases of foodborne illness each year in the U.S.; Sources: meat, especially undercooked or raw hamburger, produce and raw milk



### ***Listeria monocytogenes***

Causes listeriosis, a serious disease for pregnant women, newborns and adults with a weakened immune system; Sources: soil and water. It has been found in dairy products including soft cheeses as well as in raw and undercooked meat, in poultry and seafood, and in produce



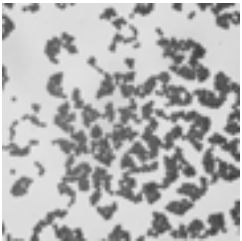
### **Norovirus**

This virus is the leading cause of diarrhea in the United States. Any food can be contaminated with norovirus if handled by someone who is infected with this virus.



### **Salmonella**

Most common cause of foodborne deaths. Responsible for millions of cases of foodborne illness a year; Sources: raw and undercooked eggs, undercooked poultry and meat, dairy products, seafood, fruits and vegetables



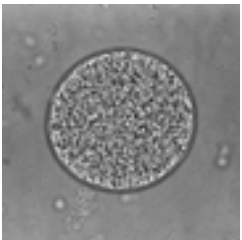
### ***Staphylococcus aureus***

This bacterium produces a toxin that causes vomiting shortly after ingesting; Sources: cooked foods high in protein (e.g. cooked ham, salads, bakery products, dairy products)



### ***Shigella***

Causes an estimated 300,000 cases of diarrhea illnesses. Poor hygiene causes *Shigella* to be easily passed from person to person. Sources: salads, milk and dairy products, and unclean water.



### ***Toxoplasma gondii***

A parasite that causes toxoplasmosis, a very severe disease that can produce central nervous system disorders particularly mental retardation and visual impairment in children. Pregnant women and people with weakened immune systems are at higher risk; Sources: meat, primarily pork



### ***Vibrio vulnificus***

Causes gastroenteritis or a syndrome known as primary septicemia. People with liver diseases are especially at high risk; Sources: raw or undercooked seafood

For more information on these and other foodborne pathogens, check out the "Bad Bug Book" on the World Wide Web at: <http://vm.cfsan.fda.gov/~mow/intro.html>.